

# Committee OKs Rt. 30 study funds

BY PAUL GALE

SVN NEWS REPORTER

pgale@svnmail.com

WASHINGTON — The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved \$1.5 million for a corridor study for a U.S. Route 30 widening project from Rock Falls to Fulton.

"U.S. Highway 30 is an outdated, inadequate road for the people of Whiteside County. It is a safety hazard, it is congested, and it is holding back the development of the communities along the corridor," said U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo, R-Egan.

The widening project is a priority for the people of Whiteside County, and Manzullo said he will do everything he can to make sure it survives the House and Senate votes and is signed into law.

The funding approved Wednesday is part of a new six-year, \$275 billion federal highway program (TEA-LU), and it now heads to the full House for consideration. It must also be approved by the Senate and signed by the president before the funding is released.

U.S. Rep. Lane Evans, D-Rock Island, and House Speaker Dennis Hastert also support the project.

"I am very pleased this money was included in the bill. The legislation will help create jobs and strengthen our local transportation network. While I support this bill, I think we need even more money for transportation and will continue to fight for that," Evans said.

Blackhawk Hills Economic Development District Economic Development Director Steven Haring said the House committee action "is great news."

"We're happy they are moving on the process. ... Route 30 is terribly dangerous. The traffic count continues to rise and is used more by heavy trucks," Haring said.

Manzullo stressed any money Congress dedicates directly to the Route 30 widening project will be minor compared to the estimated \$130 million needed to complete the project.

Manzullo said he hopes to use the earmark to entice the state to contribute the bulk of the funding because more than 95 percent of the federal road money in the TEA-3 legislation will go directly to states in formula grants.

"Congressional earmarks are seed money. More than 95 percent of the federal road funding in this bill goes directly to the states in formula grants. We must let our state officials know that this regional project has tremendous support and that we expect a large chunk of the federal formula money to be spent on Route 30," Manzullo said.

Evans said officials of the federal Department of Transportation said they need another \$100 billion to meet the nation's needs between now and 2010.